

September 2018

# the BEAT



*Superintendent Jason Alexander congratulates Fran Martin on her fifty years of service to Beatrice Public Schools. Martin is a Reading Interventionist at Paddock Lane.*



**Service Awards**  
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**BHS Graduates love animals**  
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(above) Renee Griffeth-Splitter greets people when they come to the District Office. She was instrumental in many of the changes made to improve busing for students.

## **Griffeth-Splitter** named *Employee of the Month*

Renee Griffeth-Splitter was named the August Employee of the Month.

During the summer months, Renee has spent much time being tasked with projects and activities which fall out of her scope of job duties. She has been developing websites to promote safety and security, helping to align our enrollment procedures, as well as developing a system to track transportation information. “These components have taken a substantial amount of time but have tremendously helped the district continue to progress towards its goals to have a safe

and efficient environment for all students,” said her nominator.

Renee also is the first impression in our district as many different stakeholders visit the board office. She continues to keep a smile on her face and a pleasant tone in her voice as she works through situations which may arise with families. She helps parents troubleshoot problems, so they can create the most positive situation.

“She is a positive support system for the Beatrice Public School district and we are thankful that she is our em-

ployee,” said the nomination.

In addition to her district responsibilities, Renee also helps the Beatrice Educational Foundation with multiple projects, including maintaining the addresses of all BHS graduates in Donor Perfect, writing thank you letters for donations, helping classes with mailing lists for reunions, and answering questions from potential donors. Her work with the annual Golf Tournament is one of the reasons it is so successful. She plays a valuable role in the work of this organization.



Keep track of what is going on in Beatrice Public Schools.

Go to <http://www.beatricepublicschools.org/vcalendar/>

## Year begins with service awards presentation

Employees were honored for their years of service to Beatrice Public Schools on Thursday, Aug. 9. Each recipient with 5 to 20 and 30 to 45 years of service received Beatrice Bucks while those with 25 years of service received a watch or clock.

**Thirty years:** Marian Wallen, David Trout, Cindy Gronewold, Jason Sutter, and Kari Laflin.



## *Comacho-Cook honored for 40 years of service*



**(right) Forty years:** Mary Comacho-Cook. She teaches second grade at Lincoln Elementary. (above) Cook helps students determine the order of Chinese zodiac figures last year and students make bread for the annual Stone Soup activity. (photos compliments of the Beatrice Daily Sun)

# Service Awards

## BPS honors 42 for dedication to students



(right) **Twenty-five years:** Connie Leech, and Jennifer Frerichs. (above) **Twenty years:** Maria-Louise Knobel, John Jarosh, Ben Essam, Beth Cordry-Hookstra, Jen Bulson, Amy Breeden, and Annette Barnard.



(above left) **Ten Years:** Christina Lyons, Eric Meyer, and Stacy Damme. Not Pictured: Stacey Edeal, Julie Mall and Faye Plachy. (left) **Five Years:** (front row) Mindy Bursovsky, Emily Iverson, Steven Carlson (back row) Mike Urbaschek, Jason Thavenet, Ryan Stevens, David Rosenbaum, Bonnie Muller Fifteen years: Lorrie Stierwalt, Kyle Kolm, Carol Meyer, Dawn Holthus, Melanie Clay, and Ed Ankrom. Not Pictured: Joli Gullion, and Debbie Hermance.

# Stake your claim

They first staked their claim with Beatrice Public Schools and are now making a difference every day

## McInay, Kunzman connect through the Beat

Dr. Tonya McInay and Hannah Kunzman both graduated from Beatrice High School just 23 years apart. Besides both graduating from BHS they also shared a love of animals. McInay was already a veterinarian when she was featured in the May 2016 Beat while Kunzman was a sophomore at UNL.

Hannah Kunzman learned about McInay from the May 2016 article and made contact, with help from Registrar Sarah Morris, with the veterinarian. Hannah Kunzman was accepted for a shadowing experience at Veterinary Eye Specialists of Nebraska, owned by McInay.

“Tonya and her staff were wonderful and Hannah learned so much,” said Dan Kunzman, Hannah’s father. Hannah got to witness eye procedures on a frog, bird, penguin and giraffe at Henry Doorly Zoo.

First year veterinarian students are encouraged to ask a vet who has had an impact on them to present them with their coat at the White Coat ceremony. Hannah Kunzman selected McInay. “The ceremony serves as the students’ entry into the profession. They take the oath and it is pretty impressive to see 175 students and about the same number of veterinarians in the white coats on the stage, said Dan Kunzman.

Hannah is a first year student in the Iowa State program which has the first two years taught at UNL. There is a cohort of 26 students who graduated from Nebraska high schools studying on East Campus. After two years in Lincoln they will join the rest of the class of 2022 in Ames for the final two years. She was just elected by her class as their representative to the Nebraska Veterinary Medicine Society.

(below) Dr. McInay presents Hannah Kunzman with her white coat.

(right) McInay and Kunzman after the ceremony.



### Stake Your Claim

They first staked their claim with Beatrice Public Schools and now are among the best in the nation

#### McInay is one of a kind in Nebraska



*BHS was a great school to prepare me for college and my career. The size of the school allowed a good diversity of course work and activities. BHS was large enough to offer course work that prepared me for college classes and allowed me to test out of courses outside of my focus area once I went to college. This saved me money and time. The school was also small enough that I could be involved in many extracurricular activities that made me a well-rounded person able to handle many different situations in future jobs and life. The staff was very focused on my academic goals and cared about my individual success. Looking back to my many different activities from student council, Limited Edition, drill team, sports, etc., each teacher and coach pushed me beyond my own belief level and taught me to keep my options open. I feel that Beatrice is a great community to raise a family.*

Dr. Tonya R. (McKissick) McInay, MS, DACVO



Beatrice Public Schools All Stars  
Dr. Tonya R. McInay, class of 1991

Tonya (McKissick) McInay is a veterinary ophthalmologist. It took 13 years of college to become board certified in veterinary ophthalmology. She is the only veterinary ophthalmologist in Nebraska.

She owns and operates Veterinary Eye Specialists of Nebraska in Omaha. Her caseload consists of all species except humans. It consists of mostly dogs, then cats, horses and

exotics.

She does the eyes for the Henry Doorly Zoo and the Lincoln Zoo as well. “It’s quite different performing cataract surgery on a King Penguin compared to Fido the family dog,” said McInay.

She said there is never a dull moment and she truly enjoys her job. “It is so rewarding to have owners who are so thankful when their dog can

see again. Owners light up when talking about their dog being able to run and chase their ball again,” said McInay.

She said she never would have thought testing high in spatial relations in junior high would lead to a career in intricate surgery. “I’m thankful for the foundation that BHS gave me to lead me where I am today,” added McInay.



(above) Dr. McInay works on the eye of a bald eagle. (right) Dr. McInay works on the eye of a giraffe.



# New superintendent leads August meeting

Renee Griffeth-Splitter was recognized as the August Employee of the Month. She received a plaque and \$50 in Chamber Bucks.

## Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Jason Alexander said the year was off to a great start and added that kindergarten through ninth grade students, except those at Paddock Lane, start school on Aug. 15 while pre-schoolers and tenth through twelfth graders will start on Aug. 16.

To accommodate for move-in time at the new building at Paddock Lane, the start date has been pushed back to Aug. 20.

Alexander spoke briefly about busing and the three goals of safety, equity, and efficiency for the transportation system.

## Discussion

The board heard second readings on 14 policies.

Alexander introduced Rogge Construction and Michael Fakler to provide an update on Paddock Lane addition. Randy Rogge provided Board members with some basic background on the project and some insight as to why the building was not complete by the Aug. 1 completion date that was listed in the agreement.

The main reason for the delay in the building project was the energy recovery unit (ERV) and the original supplier not being able to build it to the specs. It was noted that the subcontractors falling behind on one portion leads to a domino effect making it hard for all to stay on schedule.

Zimmerman asked where we are at this point. Rogge noted that the fire marshal was in today and will be back tomorrow to re-examine a couple of things. He added that the big thing right now is to get the fire marshal's approval for occupancy.

Both the city inspector and state electrical inspector have been through the build-

ing and things are on track to get the occupancy permit this week.

Byars asked for an explanation on the lack of workers on site and what appeared to be no sense of urgency in the beginning stages. Byars also expressed disappointment for the staff and students at Paddock Lane who had to delay their start to the school year due to the building not being complete by the original deadline. Rogge apologized and wished that those things could be changed, but it was a very busy construction summer and they ran into some delays.

Martin stated that she didn't get the feeling of urgency throughout the project and was surprised with the lack of communication. Fakler noted that communication throughout the process was done with former Superintendent Pat Nauroth and he assumed it was then being communicated with the Board from that point on.

Pieper noted that with the lack of progress on the project until recently, she expressed her concerns about the quality of workmanship.

Winter expressed appreciation to the reps from Rogge and Fakler for coming to address the Board, but like everyone else he was disappointed that they did not meet the completion date. Rogge and Fakler assured the Board that they are staying on top of the quality of work and they will do a final punch list before leaving.

Byars asked when final completion will be done and Fakler said that it will be after the ERV unit will be installed which will be late September. Rogge noted that any additional work will not disrupt the completion of the classroom as work will be completed after school hours.

## Action Items

Board approval was given to contracts with Dr. Don Belau, school psychologist, and with Rhiannon Svitak, speech lan-

guage pathologist.

Approval was also given to hiring a .48 FTE birth to 5 special education teacher.

## Administrator's Report

Principal Elizabeth Replogle noted that Sneak Peek for Paddock Lane is Friday, August 17 and she invited Board members to come take a look at the new building. Special Education Director Beth Cordry-Hookstra noted that the new Level 3 program has its open house on August 14 from 5-7 PM and board members are invited to that as well.

## Next Meetings

The next meeting of the Committee of the Whole will be on Sept. 27 at 6 p.m. in the Central Administration Building. The next board meeting will be on Oct. 8 at 7 p.m. at the Central Administration Building.

## Beatrice Public Schools Board of Education

**Janet Byars**

**Doris Martin, Vice-President**

**Lisa Pieper**

**Nancy Sedlacek**

**Steve Winter**

**Jon Zimmerman, President**

## Board of Education Meetings

*Sept. 27, 6 p.m.*

Committee of the Whole Meeting

*Oct. 8, 7 p.m.*

Board of Education Meeting